

15 April 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Howard Stoertz
NIO, Strategic Programs

SUBJECT: Department of Justice's Request for
Reassessment of the Threat of Clandestine
Introduction of Nuclear Weapons Into the
United States

1. Attached is a 3 April letter to Mr. Colby from the Acting Chairman of the Justice Department's Interdepartmental Committee on Internal Security. As explained in the letter, that Committee is charged with periodically reviewing the threat of clandestine introduction of nuclear weapons into the United States and the resources available to counter any such threat. The letter asks that the DCI provide a current assessment of the validity of the judgments set forth in what appears to have been the last formal Estimate on this subject: NIE 4-70 (7 July 1970).

2. Would you please prepare a reply to this letter for the DCI's signature. You may want to reply in two ways: initially, by a simple note of acknowledgement to be sent within the next day or two, with this note to be followed by a more substantive answer prepared after you have had a chance to conduct any reassessments you feel necessary. I have appended a copy of NIE 4-70 plus some germane October 1972 correspondence between the Committee and [REDACTED]

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3. This is a subject about which I know relatively little. To me, the language of NIE 4-70 is probably still valid so far as it goes, but there are two areas in which significant change could well have occurred over the past four years: the technological and the political.

a. On the technological side there may have been a diffusion of the technological data/knowledge required to put together a nuclear device and, possibly, hardware or other improvements which would make a device in the 20kt range easier to assemble and materially smaller

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than would have been the case four years ago.

b. On the political side, the Estimate (NIE 4-70) focuses almost exclusively on nuclear weapons being clandestinely introduced by "foreign nations" in the furtherance of a specific overall military strategy. It does not consider, or at least does not specifically address, the risk of such weapons being introduced by some doctrinaire political fringe group or organization purely as a terror gambit. This may not be a practical problem in 1974 (the state of technology could partially controlling) but given the proliferation over the last four years of terroristic activity conducted for a variety of ends, this is a factor that any current risk reassessment should address, even if the net conclusion is that this particular can be discounted.

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George A. Carver, Jr.
D/DCI/NIO

Attachment - As Stated

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